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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CVIS](#) [ETRD](#) [BM](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: GOR INTERPRETS BURMA DIFFERENTLY

REF: A. STATE 146862
[1](#)B. MOSCOW 4856
[1](#)C. MOSCOW 4774

Classified By: Political M/C Alice Wells for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) On October 25, MFA Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand Division Second Secretary Aleksey Semenikhin provided a more nuanced GOR position on recent events in Burma (refs B and C). Displaying refreshing honesty, he acknowledged that earlier claims the GOR had limited information on the Burmese government's crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators were overstated, as was an MFA official's contention that many of the Buddhist monks participating in the demonstrations were not genuine. According to Semenikhin, the MFA received frequent and detailed reports from its Embassy in Rangoon during the crisis. Russia's extensive sources, including government officials, private citizens and representatives of Burma's various ethnic groups, supplied on-the-scenes reports to the GOR. Semenikhin said the difference between the U.S. and GOR positions on Burma reflects only "different interpretations" of the information.

[1](#)2. (C) Semenikhin stressed that the October 22 GOR statement praising the Burmese regime for establishing a commission to draft a new Constitution was not intended to discount the recent violence in Burma. The GOR made clear its disapproval of the violence by supporting the October 11 UNSC Presidential Statement. The GOR's more recent statement aimed to demonstrate that the situation in Burma had "stabilized" and the Burmese government was ready to move forward with its roadmap for reform to end political and ethnic tensions in the country.

[1](#)3. (C) Semenikhin appreciated the information on new U.S. sanctions imposed on Burma (ref A), but reiterated that the GOR views efforts to isolate the Burmese regime as counterproductive. Semenikhin argued that sanctions would be ineffective without the participation of China and India. "We all know" that China and India are particularly interested in Burma's extensive natural resources and "will not do anything" that could harm their relations with the Burmese regime, Semenikhin added.
Burns